

Times Have Changed: Introducing the DRIs.

You're probably familiar with the RDAs for vitamins and minerals. But now there are new values: the Dietary Reference Intakes.

For decades, the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) have been the only levels established for vitamins and minerals. In the 1990s, however, new terms were developed describing nutrient guidelines. You can see and hear about these new terms in the news, so here's a brief explanation of the new Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs).

DRIs: Reference values for nutrient-intake to be used in planning and evaluating the diets of healthy individuals. They include the familiar Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs), and 3 new values: Adequate Intake (AI), Tolerable Upper Intake Level (UL), and the Estimated Average Requirement (EAR).

RDA: The average amount of a nutrient, recommended daily, that will meet the needs of nearly all individuals in a particular age-category.

EAR: The average amount of a nutrient estimated to meet the need of 50% of healthy individuals in a particular age-category. Used to develop the RDAs.

AI: When an RDA cannot be determined, an AI is established. This is the recommended amount of a nutrient to be consumed daily, based on observations of and experiments with healthy individuals.

UL: This is the highest level of a nutrient that should *not* pose risk of ill health effects in most individuals. As intake increases above the UL, the risk of adverse health effects, and in some cases toxicity, increases. This is one example where *more is not always better*. To date, not every nutrient has a UL established.

The DRIs are used to determine nutrient percentages on food labels and to gauge nutrient intake of individuals.

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